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(24)

DEFENSE INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

Military Intelligence Summary

SECTION XI
LATIN AMERICA (U)

JUNE 1976

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MILITARY INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY (MIS) (U)

DDI-2680-11-76

Information Cutoff Date: 1 April 1976

Section XI

LATIN AMERICA

Argentina
Bolivia
Brazil
Chile
Colombia
Cuba
Dominican Republic
Ecuador
El Salvador
Guatemala
Guyana
Haiti
Honduras
Jamaica
Mexico
Nicaragua
Panama
Paraguay
Peru
Uruguay
Venezuela

DDI-2680-11A-75, MIS, Section XI, 1 October 1975 is superseded and should be destroyed.

~~NATIONAL SECURITY INFORMATION~~
~~Unauthorized Disclosure Subject to Criminal Sanctions~~

This is a Department of Defense Intelligence Document prepared by the Western Area Division, Directorate for Intelligence, Defense Intelligence Agency.

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MILITARY INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY (MIS)

PREFACE

The Military Intelligence Summary (MIS), published in eleven volumes, is a synopsis of military intelligence worldwide. Intended to serve as a ready reference, the MIS presents a compilation of intelligence on those forces which contribute to the military security of each country, and on the political and economic factors affecting the country's military capability. Published semiannually, the MIS serves to update other DIA publications.

The intelligence data in the MIS is that available in DIA as of the first day of the month of publication except where otherwise indicated.

Comments and suggestions are invited. These should be addressed to the Defense Intelligence Agency, Washington, D.C. 20301.

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MILITARY INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY

GUATEMALA

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A. ~~(C/NOFORN)~~ Political Military Situation

Guatemala is a republic with popularly elected President and legislature. Brig Gen Kjell Laugerud García (Army, Ret), former Minister of National Defense, was inaugurated as President on 1 July 1974 for a four-year term. Although politically inexperienced, President Laugerud has taken tight hold of the reins of government, particularly since an earthquake devastated Guatemala on 4 February 1976. Disaster relief appears to have been well organized, and the country now is on the road to recovery. Internationally, Laugerud generally has supported the United States, although he has been more independent than his predecessor on some questions. Tensions with the United Kingdom over Belize, sporadic for many years, heated up again in the last half of 1975, Guatemala increased its military strength in the Petén region bordering the British colony, and the UK reinforced its defenses in Belize to discourage any untoward move by Guatemala. Since that time, some British units have returned to the United Kingdom, and negotiations over the future of Belize were being resumed between the UK and Guatemala in April 1976.

Guatemala's armed forces are capable of defending the country against invasion by any of its Central American neighbors. They could conduct successful small-scale operations against El Salvador, Honduras, or--provided British elements were not present--Belize. The armed forces are adversely affected by a topheavy senior officer corps, absence of a career program for NCO's, and obsolescent equipment. Officially designated the Army of Guatemala, the armed forces consist almost exclusively of a ground element (popularly called the Guatemalan Army), plus a small Air Force and Navy. The President is titular Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces, with control highly centralized under the Minister of National Defense, who normally is a senior Army officer. The military establishment theoretically is commanded by the Army Chief of Staff. In practice, however, the Minister of National Defense tends to communicate directly with the Chiefs of the Air Force and Navy. The armed forces are generally pro-West, particularly pro-United States, and have experienced no significant Communist penetration. Their public image, although poor in the past, has been generally improving because of increased emphasis on professionalism and participation in civic action projects. Currently, because of disaster relief activities, the armed forces enjoy a particularly good public image.

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B. (U) Key Officials:

President: Kjell Laugerud García (Brig Gen, Army, Ret)
Minister of Foreign Relations: Adolfo Molina Orantes
Minister of Government and Interior: Brig Gen René Leonel Vassaux Martínez (Army)
Minister of National Defense: Brig Gen Fernando Romeo Lucas García (Army)
Army: Chief of Staff, Brig Gen Otto Guillermo Spiegler Noriega
Navy: Chief, Capt José Antonio Contreras Roca (Acting)*
Air Force: Chief, Col Roberto José Francisco Salazar Asturias
National Police: Director General, Col Ricardo Antonio Escalante Gonzales

C. (U) Population and Military Manpower:

Population: 5,934,000 as of 1 January 1976.
Males (ages 15-49): 1,457,000; physically fit, 948,000.
Ethnic Divisions: Indian--41.4%, Ladino**--58.6%.
Literacy: about 30%.

D. (U) Military Budget:

$33,900,000 proposed for fiscal year ending 31 December 1976; 6.7% of the proposed central government budget and about 1.0% of estimated GNP. No service allocation is available. Dollar value converted from quetzals at the exchange rate of one quetzal equals US $1.00.

E. ~~(C)~~ Army:

Personnel Strength: 12,330 (1,055 officers, 1,545 NCO's, 6,690 privates, 2,470 specialists, and 570 students and cadets). Reserve--35,000, semitrained.
Major Units: 4 brigades, 4 separate battalions (1 infantry, 1 parachute infantry, 1 military police, 1 engineer), and 2 separate battalion-equivalent units (Mobile Military Police, Presidential Guard). In addition, there is a 400-man Tactical Group, stationed at La Aurora Air Base for airport security.
Major Equipment: 13 75-mm pack howitzers, 12 105-mm howitzers, 10 M113 armored personnel carriers, 20 armored cars, and 6 M3A1 light tanks.

F. ~~(C)~~ Navy:

Personnel Strength: 522 (36 Navy officers, 10 Marine officers, 232 enlisted Navy, and 244 enlisted Marines). No reserve.
Ships: 11 patrol boats (6 PB, 5 PBR), 1 mechanized landing craft (LCM).

* The Chief of the Navy, Vice Adm Ricardo Peralta Méndez, currently is serving as Executive Director, National Committee of Reconstruction.
** Westernized Indian, mestizo, and white.

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Units: The Navy is a small patrol force, with two naval bases (one on the Caribbean and one on the Pacific coast) and one Marine company (on the Caribbean, with one additional platoon on the Pacific Coast).

G. ~~(C)~~ Air Force:

Personnel Strength: 370 (75 officers and 295 enlisted men), including 60 pilots. No reserve.
Units: 1 attack, 1 transport, 1 reconnaissance, and 1 helicopter squadron.
Aircraft: Total 43: 11 jet (all fighters); 6 turboprop (transport); 20 prop (10 transports, 10 utility); 6 helicopters (all turbine) (5 of 10 Israeli Arava aircraft have been delivered; 3 UH-1H are on order.)

H. ~~(C)~~ Paramilitary:

None. The civil police consist of two distinct agencies, both subordinate to the Ministry of Government. Personnel Strength: National Police--5,570; Treasury Police--1,058.

I. (U) Key U.S. Officials (all in Guatemala City except as indicated):

Chief of Mission: Ambassador Francis E. Meloy
Chief, AID Mission: Edward A. Coy
Defense Attache and Army Attache: Col John F. Hook
Naval Attache (Mexico City): Capt Eddie F. Best
Air Attache (Tegucigalpa): Col Delmore L. Fessenden
MILGP Commander and Chief, Army Section: Col Charles D. Corbett
Chief, Navy Section: Cdr William S. Brown, Jr.
Chief, Air Force Section: Col Robert E. Waller